



PERCEPTION OF ADOLESCENTS ABOUT THE ACTIVITY OF LIFE CARE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE AND DRESSING UP

PERCEPÇÃO DE ADOLESCENTES ACERCA DA ATIVIDADE DE VIDA CUIDAR DA HIGIENE PESSOAL E SE VESTIR

PERCEPCIÓN DE ADOLESCENTES ACERCA DE LA ACTIVIDAD DE VIDA CUIDAR DE LA HIGIENE PERSONAL Y VESTIRSE

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to know the perception of adolescents about the life activity to take care of personal hygiene and to dress up. **Method:** action research with a qualitative approach, developed in a school located in the outskirts of Fortaleza/CE, Brazil. There were 25 adolescents selected who participated in an educational workshop, addressing the activity of personal hygiene and dressing up. Discursive practices were used to analyze the data. **Results:** the meaning of boys' clothing and the use of short clothes for party and discrete clothes for formal environments by girls were evidenced. Participants reported on the importance of body hygiene, including hand washing. Oral health was interpreted as an important form of relationship with peers. **Conclusion:** Nursing must always rediscover the adolescent, entering his world in an attempt to seek a more directed care through the knowledge. The elements of caring require methodologies that identify vulnerabilities, and the dialogical is a possible way. **Descriptors:** Adolescent; Health Education; Nursing Models.

RESUMO

Objetivo: conhecer a percepção de adolescentes acerca da atividade de vida cuidar da higiene pessoal e se vestir. **Método:** pesquisa-ação, de abordagem qualitativa, desenvolvida em uma escola localizada na periferia de Fortaleza/CE, Brasil. Foram selecionados 25 adolescentes que participaram de uma oficina educativa, abordando a atividade de vida higiene pessoal e se vestir. Para a análise dos dados, foram utilizadas as práticas discursivas. **Resultados:** evidenciaram o significado do vestuário pelos meninos e o uso de roupas curtas para festas e discretas para ambientes formais pelas meninas. Os participantes relataram a importância da higiene corporal, incluindo lavagem das mãos. A saúde bucal foi interpretada como forma importante de relacionamento com os pares. **Conclusão:** a enfermagem deve sempre redescobrir o adolescente, adentrar em seu mundo numa tentativa de por meio do conhecimento buscar um cuidado mais direcionado. Os elementos próprio do cuidar exigem metodologias que busquem identificar as vulnerabilidades, sendo o meio dialógico uma maneira possível. **Descritores:** Adolescente; Educação em Saúde; Modelos de Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: conocer la percepción de adolescentes acerca de la actividad de vida cuidar de la higiene personal y vestirse. **Método:** investigación-acción, de enfoque cualitativo, desarrollada en una escuela localizada en la periferia de Fortaleza/CE, Brazil. Fueron seleccionados 25 adolescentes que participaron de un taller educativo, enfocando la actividad de vida higiene personal y vestirse. Para el análisis de los datos fueron utilizadas las prácticas discursivas. **Resultados:** se evidenciaron significado del vestuario por los niños y el uso de ropas cortas para fiestas y discretas para ambientes formales por las niñas. los participantes relataron la importancia de la higiene corporal, incluyendo lavado de las manos. La salud bucal fue interpretada como forma importante de relacionamiento con los pares. **Conclusión:** la enfermería debe siempre redescubrir el adolescente, entrar en su mundo en una tentativa de por medio del conocimiento buscar un cuidado más direcionado. Los elementos propios de cuidar exigen metodologías que alcance identificar las vulnerabilidades, siendo el medio dialógico una manera posible. **Palabras clave:** Adolescente; Educación en Salud; Modelos de Enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

The society is concerned with measures that provide greater support to the adolescent's well-being, and it is necessary to explore the environment in which they live to devise strategies consistent with their reality. The adolescent-actor of social and material relationships is understood as an individual external to his psychological dimension, revealing aspects related to his subjectivity, but with dimensions that demonstrate a same productive movement - living a period marked by buildings of behavior.¹

When the adolescent begins to make their choices, they are often motivated by family, peers or society, or even the junction of this trilogy. Thinking about their way of communicating, dressing up, feeding to refer to their reality, their context, their life activities. These activities need to be known to devise effective health strategies.

The life activity taking care of personal hygiene and dressing involves complex issues such as culture and sexuality, which are intrinsically related to the health and well-being of the adolescent. Studies need to be directed to knowing and intervening in this life activity, highlighting behavioral variations, social relationships, and behavior problems to analyze risk factors that young people develop.²

It is also evidenced that actions aimed at providing reflection to adolescents need to contextualize social networks, such as schools and communities, connoting in a medium that directly affects their attitudes and behaviors.³ Thus, knowing the adolescent is paramount for any intervention action.

Based on the above, the objective of this study is to know the perception of adolescents about the life activity to take care of personal hygiene and to dress up.

METHOD

Action research with a qualitative approach⁴, carried out at a school located in the Pirambu neighborhood, in Fortaleza-Ceará, Brazil. This neighborhood has high crime rates and drug use. The participants were chosen according to the following inclusion criteria: to study at night, not to benefit from the actions of Health Promotion by the Family Health Strategy and to be between 10 and 19 years old (age group defined by the Ministry of Health as Relevant to adolescence). Thus, 25 participants were selected, who were between 15 and 18 years old.

The 25 adolescents who participated in this study were in the modality of Education of Youths and Adults (EJA). The search period was April through June 2011.

The activities had the Life Model as a theoretical reference. It is important to highlight that the Life Model is composed of 12 activities: 1) Maintain a safe environment; 2) Communicate; 3) Breathing; 4) Eat and drink; 5) Eliminate; 6) Take care of personal hygiene and dress up; 7) Check the temperature of the body; 8) Mobilize; 9) Work and be distracted; 10) Expressing sexuality; 11) Sleep; And 12) Dying.

Due to its extension, this article was chosen to expose the results that contemplate the life activity to take care of personal hygiene and dressing up. This activity describes cultural aspects, the physical structure of facilities, biological development, psychological factor in performing this life activity and knowledge about personal hygiene.⁵ However, in the workshop done on the study, the focus was on the perception of body hygiene and dressing up. During the workshop videos, that triggered discussion were used.

Discursive practices were used for the analysis of the data.⁶ The legal and ethical aspects involving research with human beings were respected, by Resolution N° 196/96 of the National Health Council. Many responsible ones as the adolescents signed the Term of Free and Clarified Consent Form. The study was submitted to the Ethics in Research Committee of the Federal University of Ceará, and it was approved at a meeting on March 14, 2011, whose protocol received the number 038/11. To maintain the anonymity of the adolescents, the name of Maria and a letter was used for the girls and José and a letter was used for the boys.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this educational workshop, habits of hygiene were approached, such as body and teeth care, also extending to handwashing. The dressing reflects much the context in which the young man enters, as well as delimits parameters for the exercise of his sexuality. The first video used was about hand hygiene. This video was developed by the Ministry of Health in the campaign against Influenza A (H1N1). It involved the need to sanitize hands in public places, after some action, before eating, even before and after the handling of eyes and nose. However, this problematizing video extended to the discussion of body hygiene.

The reflection also involved the pathologies of direct contact, having the discussion of common situations, such as when sitting somewhere where a person sat previously with a contact infection; but the purpose was to get them to take responsibility in the care of their body.

Research should seek to unveil the social representations of the body and the care indicated by the subjects to broaden the concept of basic care in Nursing so that nursing contextualizes its actions according to what the population wants.⁷ Thus, the practice of body hygiene in the view of the young people studied was discussed. Their perceptions were as follows:

To prevent bacterial disease. (José E)

Before we ever do anything, we must wash our hands, especially in the kitchen. (Maria G)

When I get a shower, I feel lazy. (José B)

I feel relieved to be clean. (Maria I)

These practices are noticeable in the prevention of diseases and domestic practices. There was also the feeling that cleanliness can bring, as reported by Maria I, "relieved to be clean," and the sense of relaxation perceived as laziness.

For the adolescent, the corporal hygiene must be attentively worked by the changes occurred in the puberty and mediated for the commitment to take care of the body in the exercise of its sexuality.

Continuing the workshop, a dialogue began on the adolescent's clothing. The adolescent's clothing choices lean toward the group in which they relate to occur to their acceptance or the tendency of what is being used exposed by the media. The reflection of this workshop was based on the assertion that the way of dressing contextualizes the sexuality of the young person, as well as expresses a nonverbal communication. In the introduction of this theme, it was wondered about how adolescents dress. The following thoughts were unveiled:

Some dress pants, other shorts. (Maria G)

[...] "panties" (joking tone). (José D)

The girls will not go without panties, but there are some that even goes. (Maria I)

[...] most girls wear short jeans and T-shirts. (José E)

Boys like to wear pants, brand blouses. They give great value. There are some who like to wear branded sandals. (Maria I)

In contemporary society, characterized by acceleration, speed, consumption, immediate satisfaction of desires, it provides a change in the behavior of individuals in general⁸. Thus, young people are stimulated to stereotyped

models of consumption, bringing value to expensive objects with a well-known brand in the market. In the dialogues, jokes occurred among themselves as occurred between José D and Maria I. This shows that they were comfortable to be participatory in groups and open to the interpersonal relationship.

In the comment of Maria I, the boys were embarrassed, because in the group there were two that were dressed and shoes with the brands said by the young woman.

In this workshop, adolescents' perceptions of gender relationships were identified, given the significant repercussions on the experiences and senses attributed to them by adolescents, showing the different vulnerabilities to which boys and girls are exposed. Adolescence is a time to have fun, enjoy life and prepare for the future, mixing the complaints about the risks experienced and the restrictions imposed and own characterizations⁹.

Regarding the clothing of the group, there is the following narrative:

[...] girls like brands, but not like boys... they like it, but it is already "handled." The boys do not, everything has to be branded, every brand is better, they are advancing. They want to show themselves. (Maria I)

When asked about the choice of the boys in dressing up, based on the affirmation of Maria I, it was realized that many do not know to explain the reasons why they make these choices. Therefore, it was observed the vulnerabilities of the young person in the decision making, because, in a simple situation like this, it is noticed that their motivations often are based on stereotyped models.

The sexuality and clothing association was inserted in the dialogue. Nowadays, it is observed that the young women dress to mark the body, this expression being a way of characterizing an object of conquest.¹⁰ This moment was mediated by the questioning: Does the clothing express the sexuality of the person? The following comments were highlighted:

Yes, because there is a person who wears clothes and is already showing himself. Wanting to show her way. (Maria D)

Sometimes yes, sometimes not, there are many girls who like to wear clothes so short. Then the person goes and says: "your clothes are short." Then this person says: "What is beautiful is to be shown" ... but not [...]. (Maria G)

There are people who wear short clothes; then it is a bad person soon, but it is not, sometimes it is the person's taste. Just like boys like to brand, girls are the very hard

one who does not wear short clothing, most like short clothing. People get upset, I have already seen, "look, there's a bitch in the shorts." There she sees a woman in her long skirt saying, "Look at the religious." (Maria I) [...] when you see a branded blouse, there is a bum goes there, it is going to be good to steal in the front... and wearing a cap there is a bum. (Maria I)

In the speech, it is observed how women's clothing is highlighted in a short and provocative manner. The decision about the way of dressing is typically female, and it is possible that the girls have responded that the clothes are important to seduce the boys, but it is characteristic of the adolescence the valorization of the clothes by both genders.¹¹

Clothing is a personal concern, and the result observed and expressed by others by the non-verbal language it portrays. In the maintenance of body temperature, man is not aware of it most of the time, because it is controlled by the regulation center in the brain. However, man can warm up or refresh himself to improve thermal discomfort.⁵ In the interview, the two life activities described are linked by the interrelation, exploring practices of hygiene and clothing. This activity of the youth also involves the expression of their sexuality and the practice of behaviors that place them in vulnerabilities, even because age is an important item to be considered.

The young people surveyed always affirm to take a bath due to the heat and to carry out practices of oral hygiene. Regarding clothing, they claim to like wearing t-shirts, shorts, slippers and branded clothes - the boys, although there is this incongruity in their speech:

I like the brand, social; I do not dress like a hobo. Hobo is branded. (José G)

Reflecting on the valorization of the body was the foundation for this workshop, because the banality of dressing leaves the adolescents trapped in the most superficial in interpersonal relationships, and it is necessary to instill in these young people the knowledge of themselves for the establishment of deep relationships.

Another item presented by young people is non-verbal communication emitted by clothing, especially for stereotyped concepts. In this context, representation is a way of interpreting the social, of characterizing the quotidian, being a means that the young person expresses of the codes, values, and ideologies linked to the social.¹

[...] what you wear is what people accuse you of being. For example, the girls arrive

with a very short, she is a slut, "pirangeira." If using a span of my hand is "pirangeira." If you are younger, you are a program girl." (José E)

If the boy is in shorts and branded sandals, he is "Pirangeiro." (Maria D)

If you have a cap, shorts, and brand name blouse, you are a hobo and will steal there. (Maria E)

Pirangueiro is people who only like the wrong thing, make walrus, gives value to the bustle and noise. (Maria I)

They like to use drugs. (Maria G)

It is important to consider the vocabulary universe of the participants of the research since it reveals the perception of the events and own expressions that occur in their daily life. The speeches allowed expressing that the young maintain concepts about the dress, as well as characterize the behavior of other young people. They make judgments about behavior; the adolescent should be seen as responsible for his actions and decisions.

Regarding the judging of clothing in different situations, the following narratives were observed:

For example: in the church women like to wear the skirt below the knee, long dress; Now, in the forró places the woman wants to wear short clothes, tight, skirt, short. (Maria G)

In this style, dancing, forró, do not go in big clothes because if it is in big clothes people will say that it is matuto, then this one would be in very short clothes. Only the good. They are going to call her to dance ... however, if she is in big clothes the people runs with fear. It is a reality. If the person goes to a forró already has some clothes already to go. Funk rarely do the guys go in brand-name clothes, vagabond style, cap and the girls go the way I said, "pirangeira" style, short very short, come out very short, t-shirt. (Maria I)

The "Pirangeira" puts on a short velvet skirt, branded shirt and branded sandal that is the same as the boys. (Maria D)

Research that promotes health education should always allow the identification of the cultural context of the researched group.¹² A particular concept of a word, "pirangueiro" that contextualizes a series of actions that characterize vulnerability for the adolescent is shown.

The rigid molds of social acceptance for the young come contextualize how to dress and relate to the young, according to the contemporary. The youth lives a prison of the stereotype that they affirm as certain, and that should be followed not to feel excluded and not accepted. In social experiences, it is perceived that the adolescent who engages in

the act of seducing is based on behaviors said as truths for them. It is important to consider that judgment are internal processes, but with a strong influence of the cultural and social aspects related to the “model” said in society, in the experiences, as in the media, besides the characteristics of the gender of each culture.¹

The adolescents' experiences strongly dictate their perception of third-party interpretation in the face of adolescent behavior. Faced with a hypothetical situation of two adolescents with the same clothing. However, a more reserved and an expansive one, the narratives were evidenced:

[...] they will say that one is quiet and the other is damn, one is crazy and the other is not. (Maria G)

You will say that one is a girl and another is calmer ... if it is a place of revelry and one is sitting will say that does not like, prefer to stay in the corner of it. (Maria D)

Let's put two colleagues, one that is already accustomed to going out and another not. One is already accustomed to wearing short clothing that everywhere has clothes to go. If I go to funk, I go in short, and if I go to church I go in a long skirt. If I tell a friend of the church to go with me at the funk dance, she will want to go with her big skirt, so I will tell her to go in shorts. As I am accustomed, I will start to dance she will first observe for later to do the same way. (Maria I)

She will not draw as much attention as if she were in shorts, put two people in a short and one in shorts and shorts will draw attention. It only covers the main the rest is all out. (Joseph E)

A great characteristic of adolescence is the relation of the pairs and the strong influence that this relation must direct and to infer in the behavior of the young person. It is important to consider the fact that adolescents associate with groups, sharing their values, attitudes and behaviors.⁹ Maria I's comment is in line with the authors' statement, as it clearly portrays the influence of the friend's behavior on the Attitude of the other.

Following the workshop, they discussed oral hygiene. Again, a problematizing video was used, explaining oral hygiene and the consequence of the lack of hygiene for oral health. Adolescents, for the most part, recognize caries as a disease and have passed through the experience.¹³ However, they consider it as a problem. Therefore, personal neglect is often the cause of oral problems among adolescents.

Of the adolescents studied, some had visibly impaired teeth, and all had no habits of attending the dentist in a preventive way. After the video, the following comments emerged:

Oral health is also part of hygiene. (Maria G)

Since we take a bath, it is very fragrant; our teeth also have to be fragrant. (José B)

It happened once with a friend of mine who went to stay with a very beautiful girl, very beautiful, he said that he thought like this: "She is a princess, the queen that comes there." He talked to her aloof. When he went to kiss her, she spoke close to him. A rotten mouth. Then he said, "Do not you know what a paste and brush are?" (Maria I)

I could tell she was all shut up when she showed her teeth were yellow, rotten. She was a princess, but what a shame. There is no good without fault. Always a good one has a defect. (Maria A)

However, bad breath is not only in the mouth; it can be throat or something else. (Joseph E)

By these words, it is easy to note the importance of oral health in personal appearance, sexuality, and general health. However, the relationship with peers was highlighted, even though this theme in adolescence is more present.

In the relationship between Health Education and Nursing in the context of oral health, it is necessary to know the motivations of adolescents to plan educational interventions that arouse interest, leaving them more involved, allowing them to understand their universe.¹⁴ It is important to motive them and lead them to reflect that “Young people have to take better care of themselves.” (José E)

At the end of the workshop, there was the evaluative moment. In this, the adolescents expressed the following thoughts:

I have learned that it is very important for the person to have not only body hygiene but more completely. Be sure to have hygiene on your own. Take care. (José B)

I learned that we have to take care of people. I learned that we have to dress the way we want it. (Maria C)

I learned that oral hygiene is always important and when we should always wash our hands. (José F)

I learned that going once a year to the dentist will do a lot come to my mouth and dress appropriately to every place I attend. (José I)

Oral health is very important; you have to brush your teeth daily to prevent cavities and bad breath and always wash your hands to prevent diseases. (Maria D)

I learned about body cleansing. (Joseph E)
Health and the smile are very important. (Maria G)
Hygiene is very important and the people of today do not want a person without hygiene (Maria E).

Adolescents reported on the importance of body hygiene, including handwashing. They reflected on self-care as the responsibility and choice of clothing, since they emit non-verbal communication. Finally, oral health, although discussed as a habit, was also interpreted as a good way of relating with peers. It was verified, on the face of it, that the group strategy through workshop is an important educational tool¹⁵. Therefore, the nurse's need to perform educational activities with adolescents in an unquestionable from an understanding of the cultural context in which they are inserted¹⁶.

CONCLUSION

Nursing should always rediscover the adolescent, entering into his world in an attempt of through the knowledge to seek a more directed care. The elements of caring require methodologies that identify vulnerabilities, and the dialogical is a possible way. The use of the Life Activities Model favored workshop mediation, and the videos sparked the discussion.

The health space of the adolescent will never be exhausted because it is changing society together. The visibility of branded clothing by boys and the affirmation of girls using short clothes and other "behaved" clothes elongates the cultural context in which they are inserted. However, it is the role of the nurse to act in response to the vulnerabilities of adolescents, based on the cultural understanding in which they live.

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Submission: 2016/09/09

Accepted: 2016/10/20

Publishing: 2016/11/15

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